



Executive Summary

City of Annandale, MN

Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan

July 2011

MINNESOTA'S
VISION
A Better State of Health

SHIP
Statewide Health Improvement Program

LIVE WRIGHT.
PART OF MINNESOTA'S STATEWIDE
HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Annandale Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan

Executive Summary

Introduction

The objective of the Annandale Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan is to establish future park, trail, and open space priorities that will work with existing recreational investments and infrastructure to establish a comprehensive park and recreation system that efficiently serves the City of Annandale well into the future.

The development of the Plan was funded through a grant received from LiveWright, a program of Wright County Human Services, distributing the proceeds of a grant from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), a program of the State of Minnesota. The grants were distributed with the intent of facilitating improvements to



healthy lifestyles. For Annandale, the grant funds are helping the community focus on opportunities to recreation, and recreation access in and around the Annandale area.

The Plan is a major element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, and is designed to work with, and build on, other planning documents of the City, including the 2005 Land Use Plan. As the City grows according to its land use planning, this Plan should help guide the City's decisions in its efforts to provide open space and recreational facilities as a component of Annandale's public infrastructure and services.

Parks and Trail Planning Principles

Vision Statement

Through this Plan the City of Annandale is seeking to integrate parks, trails, and key natural preservation areas into a comprehensive, cohesive, and balanced system. This system will provide recreational opportunities for all

residents and preserve the historic cultural and natural character of the City.

Guiding Principles

From the vision that is being articulated, guiding principles provide a greater degree of specificity. The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan establishes the following as its guiding principles:

- **Providing continuity and linkages between public parks, open spaces, residences, and businesses.** The City is expecting that the entirety of the community be interconnected through the park system and trail plan.
- **Provide for facilities that will serve the community in both short and long terms.** The City expects to prioritize recreational needs of the community in concert with all providers of recreation users, facilities, and programs.
- **Allowing reasonable flexibility on final trail routes, park locations, and plan implementation strategies.** Nothing in the plan is intended to be set in stone. If a better option to meet the same goal is available, the City may give it consideration.
- **Providing a range of choices for system users.** The Park, Open Space, and Trail Plan is not just for certain specific system users or interest groups. The City will strive to provide reasonable recreational opportunities for all residents.
- **Utilizing the system to assist in preserving the natural and historic nature of the community.** When creating the system, a priority will be placed on including areas that are found to be of significance to the community.

Park Classification

To help in planning for future park facilities, and in development facilities as they are established, the Plan creates a classification system to help define park location and construction requirements, based on the needs of the neighborhoods and/or the overall community. The following classification system is used in Annandale's Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan.

- Regional Parks – large parks that serve a broad regional area, usually beyond the borders of a single community.
- Community Parks – parks of typically 10 – 40 acres (or more) that serve community-wide recreation interests, often with special facilities such as beaches and/or ballfields.

- Neighborhood Parks – parks of less than 10 acres in area that serve the needs of a particular neighborhood, most commonly within walkable distance to the neighborhood it serves, typically of less than one-half mile.
- Greenways and Trails – multi-use pathways that provide a pedestrian or bicycle connection between parks and other community destinations, as well as providing a recreational resource on their own. Greenways and Trail facilities link larger areas and are thought of as a community facility – Sidewalks provide access within neighborhoods.
- Special Use Facilities – specialized recreational, historical, or related facilities that are often provided by non-municipal groups, including schools, business, or other private organizations.



The Plan notes that Annandale has been underserved in many of these park classifications. Inventory activities of the planning process identified a shortage of both competition and practice areas for field sports, crowded conditions on many of the existing facilities, and under-development of some of those facilities due to location or land availability.

The plan provides a detailed inventory of the existing facilities in the community, and how those parks are programmed for both existing and future development.

Community Needs Assessment

In this section of the Annandale Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, an effort is made to establish a baseline for future park development. This baseline will create an understanding about how the system needs to grow to meet both existing park and trail demand, and to match future needs.

Using comparisons from both national and Twin Cities examples of land dedicated for park and open space use, the Plan generates a goal of 12% of the City's land to be set aside for these uses. This is a goal that will need to be phased in over several years, requiring that prioritization of resources and needs will continue to be important to meet the City's park and recreation demands.

The initial objective, as is seen in the plan development phase of the document, relies on the utilization of a significant municipal land resource. By developing the Annandale Athletic Facility project on the City's former wastewater

treatment property, several needs can be addressed quickly, with an opportunity to phase in other improvements over time. This project is explore more fully in the “Future Park, Trail, and Open Space Planning” section of the document.

Future Park, Trail, and Open Space Planning

The following issues are identified in the Plan, due to an inadequate supply of field sport land and facilities:

- Community recreation officials, both public and private, have identified a significant shortage in active recreational field locations. This shortage impacts game scheduling and practice opportunities.
- The field shortage also raised issues that interfere with club or private association sports leagues, since much of the field availability is subject to school scheduling.
- The school district itself has identified a shortage of field space for its own programming, including conflicts between practice areas and times, as well as between different sports.
- The community has identified the inability to offer tournament play, including regional school tournament play, due to the lack of field space.
- The community has identified the inability to offer certain sports at all, requiring interested participants to enroll in other communities (including soccer, lacrosse, and others).

In addition to these issues, the Plan identifies a relative overall shortage of community park land area, and a specific lack of neighborhood park access to the southwest area of the community. Trail continuity is also identified as an issue, primarily resulting from trail development that has occurred without the benefit of a comprehensive guide.

The Proposed Park and Trail Plan establishes the following elements in the context of the existing facilities and future land use patterns of the City:

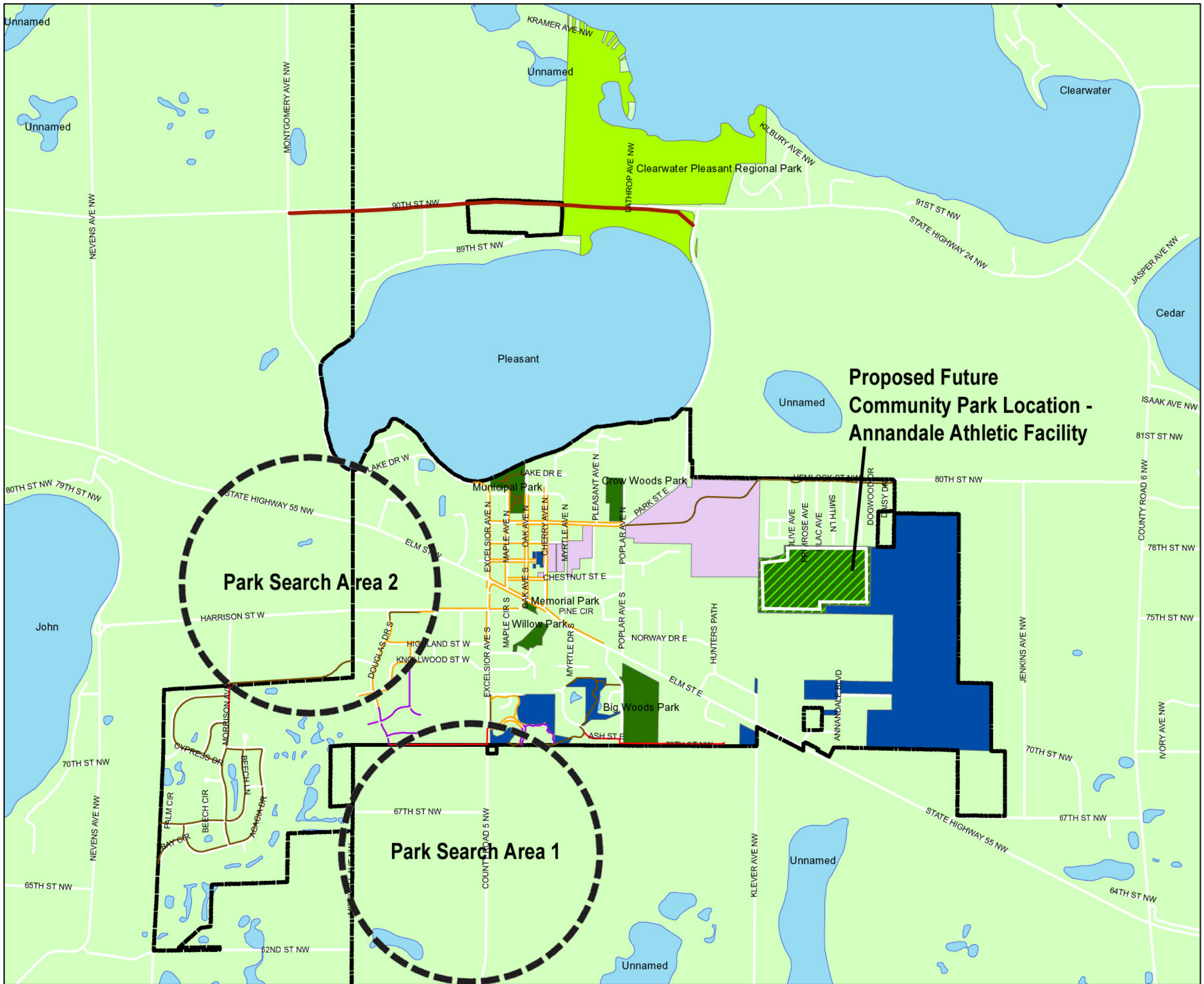
- Create a trail hierarchy and develop the trail system to complete links as shown on the Plan.
- Establish two new neighborhood parks south of Highway 55 as the community grows. One would be south, generally along County Road 5; the second would be west, generally along Harrison Street West.



- Continue to develop existing park facilities in accordance with their identified uses, and as neighborhood needs are identified.
- Coordinate trail and other systems with existing regional facilities, including County park and trail systems in the immediate area.
- Develop a major community facility, referred to often as the “Annandale Athletic Facility” to address area, field, and facility deficiencies that interfere with many current recreation programming objectives. A concept sketch of this park is included to illustrate possible field supply options in a preliminary manner.
- Continue to monitor community growth, acquiring new land as opportunities arise, to increase park and open space land supply for the future.

Implementation

The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan closes with an implementation section that gives direction to the City’s Parks Commission in the areas of new park development, describes the Parks Commission role in land development planning, and identifies potential options for funding and prioritization of park development activities. Primary among these tools is the Park Dedication authority granted by Minnesota State Statute. Updating the City’s regulations in this area, and wielding this tool strategically, will give the City its best opportunity for achieving its long-term goals in the area of Parks, Trails, and Open Space.



Park and Trail Plan Park Search Areas



Proposed Parks

City Parks

Existing Parks

Regional/County Parks

City Parks

Proposed Trails

Proposed Sidewalks

Proposed Trails

Existing Trails

Existing Sidewalks

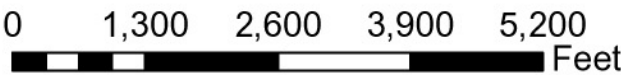
Existing Trails

School Property

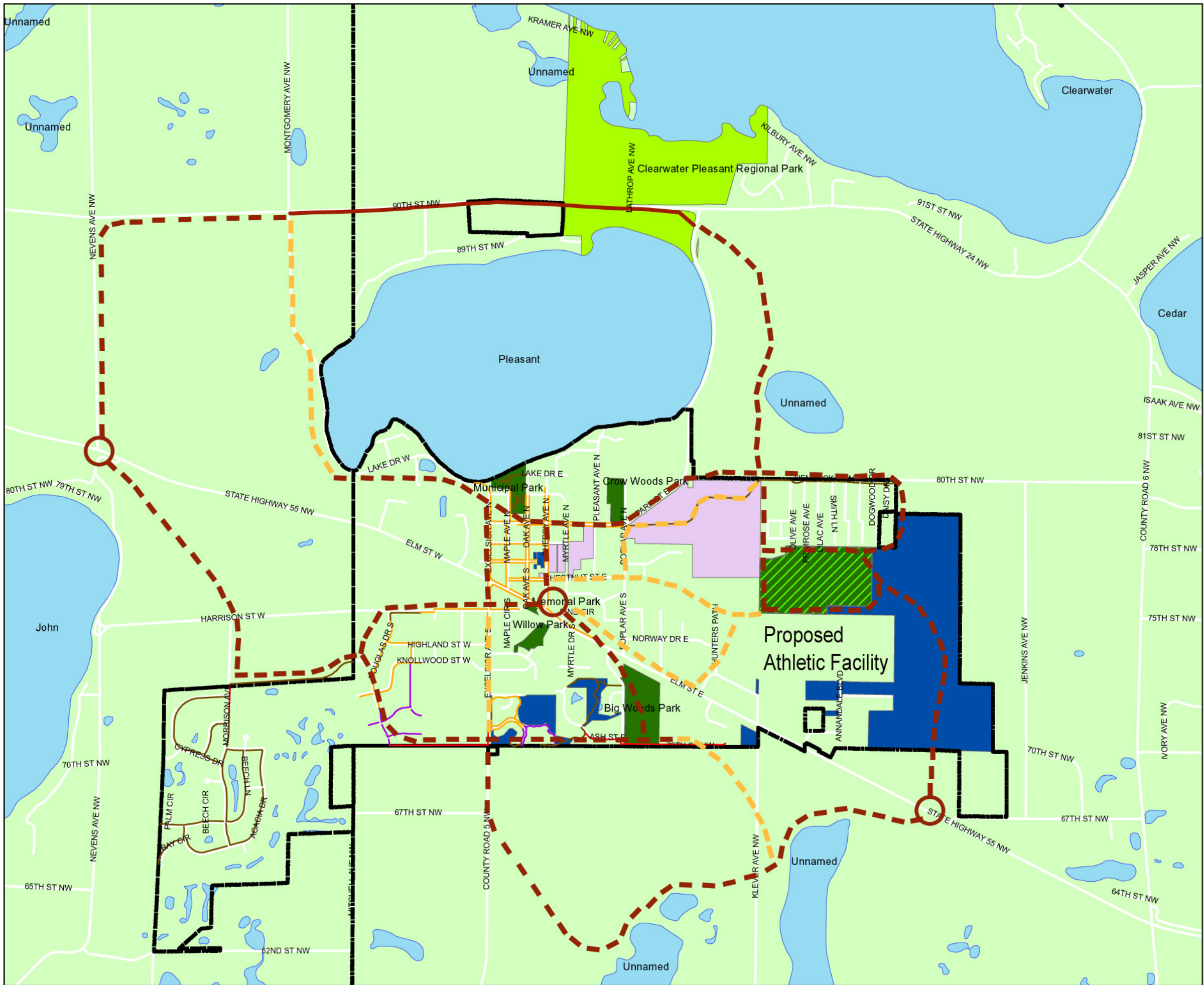
City Property

Water

City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County,
Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
Map Date: February 7, 2011.



Park and Trail Plan

Future Parks & Trails

- Proposed Primary Trail Route
- Proposed Secondary Trail Route
- Potential Future Crossing Locations

Proposed Parks

City Parks

Existing Parks

Regional/County Parks

City Parks

Proposed Trails

Proposed Sidewalks

Proposed Trails

Existing Trails

Existing Sidewalks

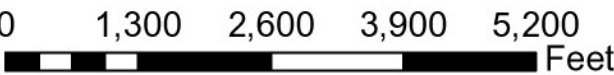
Existing Trails

School Property

City Property

Water

City/Township Boundaries



Sources: City of Annandale, Wright County, Bolton & Menk, & NAC, Inc.
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